UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.157/22
12 July 1993

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Vienna, 14-25 June 1993

ADDRESS BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE OPENING OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

VIENNA, 14 JUNE 1993

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The World Conference on Human Rights being convened today at Vienna marks one of those rare, defining moments when the entire community of States finds itself under the gaze of the world!

It is the gaze of the billions of men and women who yearn to recognize themselves in the discussions that we shall be conducting and the decisions that we shall be taking in their name. It is the gaze of all those men and women who, even now, are suffering in body and spirit because their human dignity is not recognized, or is being flouted. It is the gaze of history, as we meet at this crucial juncture!

When in 1989 the United Nations General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of Governments and the organizations concerned on the desirability of convening a world conference on human rights, it was demonstrating remarkable historical intuition.

Two months earlier, the Berlin Wall had fallen, carrying away with it a certain vision of the world, and thereby opening up new perspectives. It was in the name of freedom, democracy and human rights that entire peoples were speaking out. Their determination, their abnegation - sometimes their sacrifices - reflected then, and still reflect, their commitment to do away with alienation and totalitarianism.

Thus preparations for today's Conference have gone hand-in-hand with an impressive acceleration of the course of history.

That conjunction of events must not be seen as pure chance or mere coincidence. It is always when the world is undergoing a metamorphosis, when certainties are collapsing, when the lines are becoming blurred, that there is greatest recourse to fundamental reference points, that the quest for ethics becomes more urgent, that the will to achieve self-understanding becomes imperative.

It is therefore natural that the international community should today feel the need to focus on its own values and, reflecting on its history, ask itself what constitutes its innermost identity - in other words, ask questions about humanity and about how, by protecting humanity, it protects itself.

The goals of the Conference faithfully reflect the following key questions:

What progress has been made in the field of human rights since the Universal Declaration of 1948?

What are the obstacles and how are they to be overcome?

How can implementation of the human rights instruments be enhanced?

How effective are the methods and mechanisms established by the United Nations?

What financial resources should be allocated for United Nations action to promote human rights?

And, at a deeper level, what are the links between the goals pursued by the United Nations and human rights, including the link between development, democracy and the universal enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights?

These are universal questions, but there is no single answer to any of them. While human rights are common to all members of the international community, and each member of that community recognizes himself in them, each cultural epoch has its own special way of helping to implement them. In this connection, a debt of thanks is owed to Member States which, at the regional level, have reminded others of this reality.

Yet this reminder must be a source of positive reflection, not of sterile misunderstanding.

Human rights, viewed at the universal level, bring us face-to-face with the most challenging dialectical conflict ever: between "identity" and "otherness", between the "myself" and "others". They teach us in a direct, straightforward manner that we are at the same time identical and different.

Thus the human rights that we proclaim and seek to safeguard can be brought about only if we transcend ourselves, only if we make a conscious effort to find our common essence beyond our apparent divisions, our temporary differences, our ideological and cultural barriers.

In sum, what I mean to say, with all solemnity, is that the human rights we are about to discuss here at Vienna are not the lowest common denominator among all nations, but rather what I should like to describe as the "irreducible human element", in other words, the quintessential values through which we affirm together that we are a single human community!

I do not want to underestimate the nature of our undertaking. Yet in such an area, this is no time to seek cautious compromise or approximate solutions, to be content with soothing declarations, or, worse still, to become bogged down in verbal battles. On the contrary, we must ascend to a conception of human rights that would make such rights truly universal!

There lies the challenge of our endeavour; there lies our work; there stands or falls this Conference in future evaluations.

An awareness of the complexities of the debate is the first step towards developing a method of debate. We should be under no illusion: a debate on human rights involves complex issues. Human rights should be viewed not only as the absolute yardstick which they are, but also as a synthesis resulting from a long historical process.

As an absolute yardstick, human rights constitute the common language of humanity. Adopting this language allows all peoples to understand others and to be the authors of their own history. Human rights, by definition, are the ultimate norm of all politics.

As an historical synthesis, human rights are, in their essence, in constant movement. By that I mean that human rights have a dual nature. They should express absolute, timeless injunctions, yet simultaneously reflect a moment in the development of history. Human rights are both absolute and historically defined.

The reason I began with these statements of principle - at the risk of appearing very abstract - is that I am convinced that there will be no appropriate solutions to any of the issues that we shall be considering in the coming days, even the most technical, unless we bear in mind the fundamental dialectical conflict between the universal and the particular, between identity and difference.

What makes our task especially urgent is the fact that with the development of communications, every day the whole world is called to witness the free enjoyment - or the violation - of human rights.

Not a day goes by without scenes of warfare or famine, arbitrary arrest, torture, rape, murder, expulsion, transfers of population, and ethnic cleansing. Not a day goes by without reports of attacks on the most

fundamental freedoms. Not a day goes by without reminders of racism and the crimes it spawns, intolerance and the excesses it breeds, underdevelopment and the ravages it causes!

And what confronts those men, women and children who are suffering and dying is a reality that is more unbearable than ever; we are all similar, yet history emphasizes our differences and separates us on all sorts of grounds: political, economic, social and cultural.

We have indeed learned that it is possible to view differences as such with respect as sources of mutual enrichment; yet when differences become synonymous with inequalities, they cannot but be perceived as unjust. Today, all peoples and all nations share these feelings. That fact in itself is a step forward in the conscience of humanity.

The more so since to move from identifying inequality to rebelling against injustice is only possible in the context of a universal affirmation of the idea of human rights. Ultimately, it is this idea which allows us to move from ethical to legal considerations, and to impose value judgements and juridical constraints on human activity.

Let us not delude ourselves, however! Because judgements are based on this scale of constraints and values, it is also part of the power stakes. No doubt this is why some States seek - often and by various means - to appropriate human rights for their own benefit, even turning them into an instrument of national policy. There is no denying that some States constantly try to hijack or confiscate human rights.

Of course, in saying this, I do not mean to point a finger at any member of the international community. I only want to stress that human rights, in their very expression, reflect a power relationship.

Let us be clear about this! Human rights are closely related to the way in which States consider them; in other words, to the ways in which States govern their people; in yet other words, to the level of democracy in their political regimes!

If we bear all these problems in mind, I am positive that we shall avert the dual danger lurking ahead of us at the outset of this Conference: the danger of a cynical approach according to which the international dimension of human rights is nothing more than an ideological cover for the realpolitik of States; and the danger of a naive approach according to which human rights are the expression of universally shared values towards which all the members of the international community naturally aspire.

These considerations should remain present in our minds throughout our discussions, so that we may be bold in our proposals and firm in our principles.

In this regard, I should like to issue a solemn call: that this Conference should measure up to its subject matter and that it should be

guided by a threefold requirement, which I shall refer to as "the three imperatives of the Vienna Conference": universality, guarantees, democratization.

Let us deal first with the imperative of universality. To be sure, human rights are a product of history. As such, they should be in accordance with history, should evolve simultaneously with history and should give the various peoples and nations a reflection of themselves that they recognize as their own. Yet, the fact that human rights keep pace with the course of history should not change what constitutes their very essence, namely their universality!

Secondly, there is the imperative of guarantees. Every day we see how discredited human rights and the United Nations itself would be, in the eyes of the world, if the declarations, covenants, charters, conventions and treaties that we draft in order to protect human rights remained dead letters or were constantly violated. Human rights should therefore be covered by effective mechanisms and procedures to guarantee and protect them and to provide sanctions.

Lastly, there is the imperative of democratization. In my opinion, this is essentially what is at stake as we approach the end of the century. Only democracy, within States and within the community of States, can truly guarantee human rights. It is through democracy that individual rights and collective rights, the rights of peoples and the rights of persons, are reconciled. It is through democracy that the rights of States and the rights of the community of States are reconciled.

It is on these three imperatives - universality, guarantees and democratization - that I should like you to reflect.

The imperative of universality will undoubtedly be in evidence throughout our debates. How could it be otherwise? Universality is inherent in human rights. The Charter is categorical on this score: Article 55 states that the United Nations shall promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion". The title of the 1948 Declaration - universal, not international - reinforces this perspective.

However, this concept of universality must also be clearly understood and accepted by everyone. It would be a contradiction in terms if this imperative of universality on which our common conception of human rights is based were to become a source of misunderstanding among us.

It must therefore be stated, in the clearest possible terms, that universality is not something that is decreed, nor is it the expression of the ideological domination of one group of States over the rest of the world.

By its nature and composition, it is the General Assembly of the United Nations that is best equipped to express this idea of universality, and we should pay tribute to the human rights standard-setting in which it has been engaged for almost 50 years now.

As a result of its activities, the areas of protection have become increasingly precise: punishment of genocide, abolition of slavery, efforts to combat torture, elimination of all forms of discrimination based on race, sex, religion or belief.

Moreover, the subjects of those rights have been more clearly defined: right of peoples; protection of refugees, stateless persons, women, children, disabled persons, persons with mental illness, prisoners, victims of enforced disappearance; protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families; and protection of indigenous people. In this connection, the General Assembly is to be commended for drafting, as part of the activities relating to the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, a universal declaration for consideration next autumn.

The set of instruments resulting from this standard-setting by the United Nations General Assembly is now our common property. It has enough to satisfy all States, all peoples and all cultures, for the universality it affirms is that of the international community as a whole.

If we look closely at these instruments, and the World Conference on Human Rights affords an ideal opportunity to do so, we may be struck by, and justifiably proud of, the ceaseless efforts made by the General Assembly to develop on the very idea of universality.

While a general, abstract concept of human rights, born of liberal values, prevailed initially, as we can see from the text of the 1948 Universal Declaration, the input of the socialist States and the States of the third world helped broaden this initial vision. The 1966 Covenants bear witness to the broadening of our vision. They enable us to affirm, and I wish to emphasize this here, that civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights are equally important and worthy of attention.

We all know, however, that the General Assembly did not stop there: it expanded still further on the concept of universality by enunciating, after these collective rights, what I like to call rights of solidarity, rights which bring us back to a projected universality involving the joint action of all members of society both nationally and internationally. Since Article 1 of the Charter enunciated the right of peoples to self-determination, the General Assembly has proclaimed the right to a healthy environment, the right to peace, the right to food security, the right to ownership of the common heritage of mankind and, above all, the right to development.

I believe that this last right, in particular, shows just how modern the concept of universality is. The General Assembly went a long way towards recognizing this when, as early as 1979, it asserted that "the right to development is a human right" and that "equality of opportunity for development is a prerogative both of nations and of individuals who make up nations".

This idea was expressed even more clearly when, in 1986, the Assembly adopted a Declaration on the Right to Development which states that "the human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development". In that same

instrument, the Assembly emphasizes the corresponding duties which this right imposes on States: the duty to cooperate with each other in ensuring development, the duty to formulate international development policies and, at the national level, the duty to ensure "access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income".

I think that this approach to the concept of universality is the right one and that it is this course that we should follow.

We must recognize that while ideological splits and economic disparities may continue to be the hallmark of our international society, they cannot interfere with the universality of human rights.

I believe that at this moment in time it is less urgent to define new rights than to persuade States to adopt existing instruments and apply them effectively.

There are massive, ominous disparities in this essential area which must be corrected.

Some human rights conventions of which the United Nations is a depositary have been ratified by a large number of countries. For instance, as this Conference convened, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination had been ratified by 135 States and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by 110 States. Of the two 1966 Covenants, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has been ratified by 121 States and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by 118 States. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has been ratified by 123 States. Lastly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by 138 States.

The level of ratification of other conventions is most unsatisfactory, however. So far, only 73 States have ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; only 55 States have ratified the International Convention against Apartheid in Sports; the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1989, has been ratified by only 17 States; and only one country has ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 1990.

As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I must strongly urge States to ratify all the international human rights treaties. To that end, I intend to open a dialogue with Member States to identify and try to overcome the obstacles to ratification.

I also believe that regional organizations have a positive role to play in making States increasingly aware of this problem. Regional action for the promotion of human rights in no way conflicts with United Nations action at the universal level - quite the opposite.

I understand the recent regional meetings on human rights as reflecting a concern to remain true to this concept of universality, no matter what serious problems or legitimate questions it may raise.

Important instruments exist in Latin America: the 1948 American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, the 1960 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and, lastly, the 1969 American Convention on Human Rights, now in force.

There are important instruments in Europe too, such as the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, drawn up within the Council of Europe, or the 1961 European Social Charter.

There are important instruments in Africa: I am thinking particularly of the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights adopted by the OAU Summit in June 1981, which entered into force in 1986.

Regional organizations must contribute effectively to the protection of human rights, especially where they are able to set in motion mechanisms and procedures for guaranteeing human rights.

The imperative of guarantees should be the second concern of our Conference. What do human rights amount to without suitable machinery and structures to ensure their effectiveness, both internally and internationally? Here again, the Vienna Conference must not lapse into unproductive debates or futile polemics. To avoid this, the Conference must go back to the very essence of human rights in international society, and to what is unique about them.

I am tempted to say that human rights, by their very nature, do away with the distinction traditionally drawn between the internal order and the international order. Human rights give rise to a new legal permeability. They should thus not be considered either from the viewpoint of absolute sovereignty or from the viewpoint of political intervention. On the contrary, it must be understood that human rights call for cooperation and coordination between States and international organizations.

In this context, the State should be the best guarantor of human rights. It is the State that the international community should principally entrust with ensuring the protection of individuals.

However, the issue of international action must be raised when States prove unworthy of this task, when they violate the fundamental principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, and when - far from being protectors of individuals - they become tormentors.

For us, this problem is a constant challenge, particularly since the flow of information and the effect of world public opinion make the issues in question even more pressing.

In these circumstances, the international community - that is to say, international organizations, whether universal or regional - must take over from the States that fail to fulfil their obligations. This is a legal and

institutional construction that has nothing shocking about it and does not, in my view, harm our contemporary notion of sovereignty. For I am asking - I am asking us - whether a State has the right to expect absolute respect from the international community when it is tarnishing the noble concept of sovereignty by openly putting that concept to a use that is rejected by the conscience of the world and by the law! When sovereignty becomes the ultimate argument put forward by authoritarian regimes to support their undermining of the rights and freedoms of men, women and children, such sovereignty - and I state this as a sober truth - is already condemned by history.

Moreover, I believe all members of the international community have an interest in international action being thus defined and directed. Nothing would be more detrimental to States themselves than to leave private associations or non-governmental organizations to take sole responsibility for protecting human rights in individual States.

Yes, States must be convinced that the control exercised by the international community ultimately results in the greatest respect for their sovereignty and spheres of competence.

The Vienna Conference has therefore rightly decided to evaluate methods and machinery for guaranteeing human rights with a view to improving them. It is indeed important that all of us here be aware of the changes that have taken place, where such forms of control are concerned, at the administrative and jurisdictional levels and in the operational sphere.

At the administrative level, the number of procedures for guaranteeing human rights has been increasing for years, not only within the United Nations but also at such specialized agencies as ILO and UNESCO and at such regional organizations as the Council of Europe and the Organization of American States.

Within the United Nations, a proliferation of bodies each entrusted with monitoring implementation of a specific convention can even be noted. Some examples that come to mind are the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Economic and Social Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee against Torture and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

At a more general level, the Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights must be accorded a special place.

The Centre, in particular, has undergone profound changes in recent years.

Initially intended to carry out studies and provide information on all aspects of human rights, the Centre has gradually been called on to contribute to the implementation of conventions, and to participate in ad hoc committees of special rapporteurs set up to investigate such wide-ranging matters as summary executions, disappearances and instances of arbitrary detention.

It acts as the secretariat for the various human rights bodies and each year considers thousands of petitions, some of which lead, as a result of decisions of the Commission on Human Rights, to major investigative missions in the field.

Lastly, the Centre for Human Rights has been called upon to provide States with assistance and technical advice. Such assistance may involve preparing for elections, drafting constitutions or strengthening the judicial structures of the requesting States.

However, guaranteeing human rights also means setting up jurisdictional controls to punish any violations that occur.

In this area, regional organizations have shown the way - particularly in the context of the Council for Europe, in the form of the European Court of Human Rights, and in the Americas, in the form of the Inter-American Court.

I would draw your attention in this connection to the current efforts by the United nations to promote both a permanent international criminal court and a special international tribunal to prosecute the crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia.

It was in February of this year that the Security Council decided to establish such a tribunal "for the prosecution of persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991".

In asking the Secretary-General to consider this project, the Security Council has given itself an entirely new mandate. I believe that, the Tribunal should be established by a Council decision under Chapter VII of the Charter. Chapter VII offers the advantage of giving immediate effect to the establishment of the Tribunal, since all States are required to take the necessary steps to implement a decision adopted in this manner. The Council would thus be creating, in the context of an enforcement measure, a subsidiary organ as envisaged in Article 29 of the Charter, but one of a judicial nature.

I cannot discuss the development of measures taken by the Organization to safeguard human rights without mentioning the decisive action taken by the General Assembly in the area of humanitarian assistance.

Since December 1988, when the General Assembly adopted resolution 43/131 on humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, the notion of a right to humanitarian assistance has, to a certain extent, become one of the areas in which human rights can actually be guaranteed.

We have seen this reflected in the Organization's operations in the Sudan, in Somalia, in the special case of Iraq and, today, in the former Yugoslavia.

Once again, these resolutions are not intended to justify some ostensible right of intervention, but simply to reflect one of the key ideas lying behind

current efforts to safeguard human rights: the relationship between such guarantees and the imperative of democratization which the international community is rightly embracing today.

The imperative of democratization is the last - and surely the most important - rule of conduct which should guide our work. There is a growing awareness of this imperative within the international community. The process of democratization cannot be separated, in my view, from the protection of human rights. More precisely, democracy is the political framework in which human rights can best be safeguarded.

This is not merely a statement of principle, far less a concession to a fashion of the moment, but the realization that a democracy is the political system which best allows for the free exercise of individual rights. It is not possible to separate the United Nations promotion of human rights from the establishment of democratic systems within the international community.

Let me not be misunderstood nor unwittingly cause offence.

When, like so many others before me, I stress the imperative of democratization, I do not mean that some States should imitate others slavishly, nor do I expect them to borrow political systems that are alien to them, much less try to gratify certain Western States - in fact, just the opposite. Let us state, forcefully, that democracy is the private domain of no one. It can and ought to be assimilated by all cultures. It can take many forms in order to accommodate local realities more effectively. Democracy is not a model to copy from certain States, but a goal to be achieved by all peoples! It is the political expression of our common heritage. It is something to be shared by all. Thus, like human rights, democracy has a universal dimension!

To avoid misinterpretations and misunderstandings, we must all agree that democratization must not be a source of concern to some but should be an inspiration for all States! In this spirit the United Nations, in its mission to guarantee human rights, has an obligation to help States - often those that are the most disadvantaged - along the ever difficult road to democratization.

This is why we must distance ourselves from sterile polemics and act constructively to build the link between development, democracy and human rights, a link we already recognize as inescapable.

One thing is certain: there can be no sustainable development without promoting democracy and, thus, without respect for human rights. We all know that, on occasion, undemocratic practices and authoritarian policies have marked the first steps taken by some countries along the road to development. Yet, we also know that if these States do not undertake democratic reforms once they have begun to experience economic progress, they will ultimately achieve nothing more than disembodied growth, a source of greater inequity and, eventually, social unrest. Democracy alone can give development its true meaning.

This analysis must lead the developed countries to take an increasingly responsible attitude vis-a-vis developing States that are engaged in the

democratization process. More than ever before, each one must realize its own responsibility in what is a joint undertaking. Each one must understand that development assistance contributes to the promotion of democracy and human rights. This in no way diminishes the overriding responsibility of all States, including developing countries, to promote democracy and human rights at home. This matter is of concern to the entire international community, for only through the development of each State can peace for all be ensured!

Each passing day shows that authoritarian regimes are potential causes of war and the extent to which, conversely, democracy is a guarantor of peace. We have only to look at the mandates given to United Nations forces to see the connection which the Organization is making, at the operational level and in the most concrete terms possible, between peace-keeping, the establishment of democracy and the safeguarding of human rights.

The mandate given to the United Nations operation in Namibia from April 1989 to March 1990 was an early but powerful demonstration of this evolution. Since 1991, a number of major operations have incorporated this political dimension - the safeguarding of human rights and the restoration of democracy - in their mission. We have seen this in the operations in Angola, Mozambique, El Salvador, Somalia and, of course, Cambodia.

Many States, in fact, know full how desirable it is to receive the electoral assistance which they are requesting with increasing frequency from the United Nations.

In 1989, a mission was set up to monitor the electoral process in Nicaragua. The following year, a similar mission was set up in Haiti. Requests for electoral assistance continued to increase at a steady rate, and in the autumn of 1991 the General Assembly endorsed the creation, within the Department of Political Affairs, of an electoral assistance unit, which became operational in April 1992.

Since then, equipped with this new tool, the United Nations has been better able to meet the requests for electoral assistance from many States: Argentina, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, the Niger, Romania, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, Uganda ... the list is impressive.

Such requests fall into a variety of categories: the organization and holding of elections, their monitoring and verification, on-site coordination of international observers and with the many forms of technical assistance required for democratic elections to take place smoothly.

This is a major undertaking for the United Nations, and one whose magnitude must be stressed. We should not, however, blind ourselves to its limitations. The supervision and monitoring of elections do not in themselves constitute long-term guarantees of democratization and respect for human rights. This is borne out, unfortunately by the experiences of Angola and Haiti. The United Nations cannot guarantee that there will be enough of a sense of democracy for election results to be respected.

And so we have to do even more. We must help States change attitudes, persuade them to undertake structural reforms. The United Nations must be able to provide them with technical assistance that will allow them to adapt their institutions, educate their citizens, train leaders and set up regulatory mechanisms that respect democracy and reflect a concern for human rights. I am thinking specifically of how important it is to create independent systems for the administration of justice, to establish armies that respect the rule of law, to create a police force that safeguards public freedoms, and to set up systems for educating the population in human rights.

It is my conviction that our task is nothing less than setting up a civics workshop on a global scale.

Only by heightening the international community's awareness of human rights in this way and involving everyone in this effort can we prevent future violations that our conscience, and the law, will condemn. Here, as elsewhere, preventive diplomacy is urgently needed.

I look to the Conference to offer suggestions, innovations and proposals to give increasing substance to this human rights diplomacy!

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Through these thoughts and illustrations I hope I have shown that the United Nations has taken a decisive turn in its history. Imperceptibly, our determination to respect human rights is now beginning to be reflected, through concrete and pragmatic efforts, in everything we do.

This has been an important lesson for us which we must bear in mind throughout this Conference: the safeguarding of human rights is both a specific and a general goal. On the one hand, it requires us to identify increasingly specific rights and to devise increasingly effective guarantees. But it also shows us that human rights permeate all activities of our Organization, of which they are, simultaneously, the very foundation and the supreme goal.

Allow me, then, by way of conclusion and at the outset of this Conference to make a final appeal:

May human rights create for us here a special climate of solidarity and responsibility!

May they serve to bind the Assembly of States and the human community!

And, finally, may human rights become the common language of all humanity!